



Application Serial No.: 10/796,961
Reply to Office Action dated July 27, 2006

REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration of this application as presently amended and in light of the following discussion is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-15 are presently active in this case, Claims 1, 3, 5, 6, 8, and 10-15 having been amended by way of the present Amendment. Care has been taken such that no new matter has been entered. (See page 8, line 17, through page 10, line 12; page 12, line 19, through page 20, line 15; and page 20, line 17, through page 21, line 5.)

At the outset, the Applicants note that item 12 on the Office Action Summary is missing a selection in one of the three boxes regarding the receipt of copies of the foreign priority documents. The Applicants respectfully request the clarification of this issue in a subsequent Official Action.

In the outstanding Official Action, the disclosure was objected to for a minor informality. Accordingly, the specification has been amended to change "FIG. 3" on page 10, line 19, to "FIG. 2" in order to properly describe the depictions in drawings. The Applicants therefore request the withdrawal of the objection to the disclosure.

Claims 13-15 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. Claim 13 has been amended to clarify that the rockable feature is with reference to the base, as is disclosed on page 16, line 24, through page 17, line 4 of the specification, and in Figure 11. Additionally, Claims 14 and 15 have been amended to recite "A method for manufacturing a side wall" and "An apparatus for manufacturing a side wall," respectively. Accordingly, the Applicants submit that steps for combining

components of an image display apparatus, and structural cooperative relationships of element of an image display apparatus are not essential to the method recited in Claim 14 and the apparatus recited in Claim 15, respectively. Accordingly, the Applicants request the withdrawal of the indefiniteness rejections.

Claims 1, 8, and 14 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Kato et al. (JP 60-210550). Claims 5, 11, and 15 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Rose et al. (U.S. Patent No. 3,527,663). Claims 5, 6, 11, and 12 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Hirotsu et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,071,461). Claims 1, 8, and 14 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by, or alternatively under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as unpatentable over Rose et al. Claims 1, 3, 4, 8, 10, and 14 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ando (JP 2000-211630) in view of Marx (U.S. Patent No. 3,425,147). Claims 2 and 9 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kato et al. in view of Cypher et al. (U.S. Patent No. 3,223,504). Claims 7 and 13 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hirotsu et al. in view of Cathers (U.S. Patent No. 4,228,993) in view of Andrewlavage, Jr. (U.S. Patent No. 6,616,025). For the reasons discussed below, the Applicants request the withdrawal of the above art rejections.

Regarding the anticipation rejections, the Applicants note that a claim is anticipated only if each and every element as set forth in the claims is found, either expressly or inherently described, in a single prior art reference. As will be demonstrated below, the cited anticipation references clearly do not meet each and every limitation recited in the amended, rejected claims.

Furthermore, regarding the obviousness rejections, the Applicants note that the basic requirements for establishing a *prima facie* case of obviousness as set forth in MPEP 2143 include (1) there must be some suggestion or motivation, either in the references themselves or in the knowledge generally available to one of ordinary skill in the art, to modify the reference or to combine reference teachings, (2) there must be a reasonable expectation of success, and (3) the reference (or references when combined) must teach or suggest all of the claim limitations. As will be demonstrated below, the cited anticipation references clearly do not meet each and every limitation of the amended, rejected claims. The Applicants submit that a *prima facie* case of obviousness cannot be established in the present case because the cited obviousness references, either when taken singularly or in combination, do not teach or suggest all of the limitations recited in the amended, rejected claims.

Claims 1, 8, and 14 recite methods that include, among other features, (1) locating end portions of belt-shaped glass sheets so that the end portions overlap each other in a thickness direction of each glass sheet within the range of the glass sheet width, and (2) pressing lap portions of the thermally softened end portions at least once from both sides in the thickness direction of the belt-shaped glass sheets, thereby joining the lap portions together and forming the lap portions to the thickness of one belt-shaped glass sheet. The Applicants submit that the Kato et al. reference and the Rose et al. reference both fail to anticipate all of the above limitations, and the Rose et al. reference and the combination of the Ando reference and the Marx reference fail to render the above limitations obvious.

The Kato et al. reference depicts a structure for bending a strip of glass (20) in three corners, such that the glass has a configuration as depicted in Figure 3(B) of the Kato et al.

reference. In the remaining corner, one end of the strip of glass is positioned in the same plane as and adjacent to a side of the other end of the strip of glass. Then, the ends of the strip of glass are locally heated to be melt-bonded together and molded by the use of a forming die (50). Such a method is equivalent to a method described in the Description of the Related Art section of the present application.

The Katō et al. reference does not disclose locating end portions of belt-shaped glass sheets so that the *end portions overlap each other in a thickness direction of each glass sheet* within the range of the glass sheet width, as recited in Claims 1, 8, and 14. The ends of the glass strip in the Kato et al. reference do not overlap in a thickness direction (see, e.g., Figure 2 of the present application), but rather the ends are in the same plane as one another and one end is adjacent to a side of the other end. Furthermore, the Kato et al. reference does not disclose pressing lap portions of the thermally softened end portions at least once from both sides in the thickness direction of the belt-shaped glass sheets, thereby joining the lap portions together and forming the lap portions to the thickness of one belt-shaped glass sheet. Even if the structure in Figure 3(B) of the Kato et al. reference were pressed, the resulting structure could not produce the lap portions having a thickness of one belt-shaped glass sheet as claimed. Accordingly, the Applicants request the withdrawal of the anticipation rejection of Claims 1, 8, and 14 based on the Kato et al. reference.

The Rose et al. reference describes a method for the production of double glazing units that are produced of two sheets of glass secured together in a spaced, sealed relationship using a sealant strip of curable elastomer material. The Rose et al. reference describes providing strips of the elastomer material such that end portions of adjacent strips overlap,

but are trimmed to provide a uniform thickness. (See, e.g., column 2, lines 18-22.) Thus, it is evident that the Rose et al. reference does not disclose or even suggest locating end portions of belt-shaped glass sheets so that the *end portions overlap each other in a thickness direction of each glass sheet* within the range of the glass sheet width, as recited in Claims 1, 8, and 14. In fact, the Rose et al. reference teaches away from such a step by teaching the trimming of the ends such that no overlap in a thickness direction occurs. Furthermore, the Rose et al. reference clearly does not disclose pressing such lap portions in the manner recited in Claims 1, 8, and 14, since such lap portions are not present in the Rose et al. invention. Accordingly, the Applicants request the withdrawal of the anticipation rejection and the obviousness rejection of Claims 1, 8, and 14 based on the Rose et al. reference.

The Ando reference describes a flat image display device formed of a back surface substrate (202), a front surface substrate (201), and an outer frame arranged between the front surface substrate (201) and the back surface substrate (202). One embodiment of the outer frame includes a first outer frame (210) and a second outer frame (211).

The Ando reference depicts several methods of forming the outer frames, such as the methods depicted in Drawings 6 and 7. The method in Drawing 6 appears to be a method similar to that described in the Kato et al. reference, and the presently claimed invention is distinguishable therefrom for the reasons discussed above with respect to the Kato et al. reference. The method depicted in Drawing 7 does not bend the first three corners, but rather joins all four corners in the same manner as the last corner in Drawing 6. The Ando reference does not disclose locating end portions of belt-shaped glass sheets so that the *end portions overlap each other in a thickness direction of each glass sheet* within the range of

the glass sheet width, as recited in Claims 1, 8, and 14. The ends of the bent bar (216) in Drawing 6 and the ends of the members (219) in Drawing 7 do not overlap in a thickness direction (see, e.g., Figure 2 of the present application), but rather the ends are in the same plane as one another and one end is adjacent to a side of the other end. Furthermore, the Ando reference does not disclose pressing lap portions of the thermally softened end portions at least once from both sides in the thickness direction of the belt-shaped glass sheets, thereby joining the lap portions together and forming the lap portions to the thickness of one belt-shaped glass sheet. Even if the structures in Drawings 6 and 7 of the Ando reference were pressed, the resulting structure could not produce the lap portions having a thickness of one belt-shaped glass sheet as claimed.

Furthermore, the Applicants submit that the Marx reference does not supplement the deficiencies noted above in the teachings of the Ando reference. The Marx reference describes a display frame including opposed transparent panels (11, 12) having grooves (13) parallel to each edge on the outer face thereof. The panels are secured together about the object to be displayed by channel border frame members (14, 15) having inwardly turned flanges (16) that are slidably received in the grooves.

The Marx reference indicates that the pair of side elements (14) are of one length and the top and bottom pair of elements (15) are of another length as seen in Figure 1, so as to permit the assembly of the elements in an abutting relationship about the periphery of the panels (11, 12). (Column 2, lines 61-65.) Therefore, as in the Ando reference, the ends of side elements (14) and the ends of the side elements (15) do not overlap in a thickness direction (see, e.g., Figure 2 of the present application), but rather the ends are in the same

plane as one another and one end is adjacent to a side of the other end. Accordingly, the Marx reference does not disclose locating end portions of belt-shaped glass sheets so that the *end portions overlap each other in a thickness direction of each glass sheet* within the range of the glass sheet width, as recited in Claims 1, 8, and 14. Furthermore, the Marx reference does not disclose pressing lap portions of the thermally softened end portions at least once from both sides in the thickness direction of the belt-shaped glass sheets, thereby joining the lap portions together and forming the lap portions to the thickness of one belt-shaped glass sheet. No such joining is contemplated by the Marx reference.

Accordingly, the Applicants request the withdrawal of the obviousness rejection of Claims 1, 8, and 14 based on the combination of the Ando reference and the Marx reference.

Claims 5, 11, and 15 recite apparatuses that include, among other features, (1) a glass sheet holding portion which holds a plurality of belt-shaped glass sheets so that the end portions thereof overlap each other in a thickness direction of each glass sheet within the range of the glass sheet width, and (2) a clamping mechanism which presses or is configured to press lap portions of the thermally softened end portions from both sides in the thickness direction of the belt-shaped glass sheets, thereby joining the lap portions together and forming the lap portions to the thickness of one belt-shaped glass sheet. The Applicants submit that the Rose et al. reference and the Hirotsu et al. reference both fail to anticipate all of the above limitations.

As noted above, the Rose et al. reference describes providing strips of the elastomer material such that end portions of adjacent strips overlap, but are trimmed to provide a uniform thickness. (See, e.g., column 2, lines 18-22.) Thus, it is evident that the Rose et al.

reference does not disclose or even suggest a glass sheet holding portion which holds a plurality of belt-shaped glass sheets *so that the end portions thereof overlap each other in a thickness direction of each glass sheet* within the range of the glass sheet width, as recited in Claims 5, 11, and 15, since the Rose et al. reference teaches the trimming of the ends such that no overlap in a thickness direction occurs and thus no such holding portion is used. Furthermore, the Rose et al. reference clearly does not disclose a clamping mechanism which presses or is configured to press such lap portions in the manner recited in Claims 5, 11, and 15, since such lap portions are not present in the Rose et al. invention. Accordingly, the Applicants request the withdrawal of the anticipation rejection of Claims 5, 11, and 15 based on the Rose et al. reference.

The Hirotsu et al. reference describes a method and an apparatus for bending two overlapping glass plates simultaneously to form a laminated glass. The method and apparatus allows for the deep-bending of a side portion of the overlapping glass plates. As the Hirotsu et al. reference deals with a laminated glass, which has twice the thickness of each of the individual glass plates, the Hirotsu et al. reference clearly does not disclose a clamping mechanism which presses or is configured to press lap portions of the thermally softened end portions from both sides in the thickness direction of the belt-shaped glass sheets, thereby joining the lap portions together and forming the lap portions to the thickness of one belt-shaped glass sheet. Accordingly, the Applicants request the withdrawal of the anticipation rejection of Claims 5 and 11 based on the Hirotsu et al. reference.

The dependent claims are considered allowable for the reasons advanced for the independent claim from which they depend. These claims are further considered allowable as

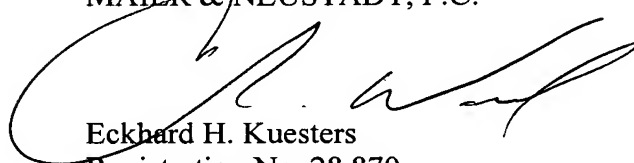
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they recite other features of the invention that are neither disclosed nor suggested by the applied references when those features are considered within the context of their respective independent claim.

Consequently, in view of the above discussion, it is respectfully submitted that the present application is in condition for formal allowance and an early and favorable reconsideration of this application is therefore requested.

Respectfully Submitted,

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